

Sara Betancur

Georgia State University

sarabetancurpro@gmail.com

Bilingualism and Language Ideologies Among Colombian Asylees in Atlanta

The current internal armed conflict in Colombia started in 1964 as a leftist political movement with guerrilla groups like las FARC (Fuerzas Revolucionarias Armadas de Colombia/*Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia*) and ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional/*National Liberation Army*). In the 1980's, right-wing paramilitary groups emerged in response to guerrilla violence as well as military conflict triggered by narcoterrorism. The experiences of Colombians living under this constant state of violence has led to the internal and international displacement of many. This Honors Thesis uses Colombia's violent history to analyze how forced migration is related to language ideologies the use of Spanish and English in the Colombian diaspora in the United States. It also explores how dominant language ideologies' association of English with success influences the desire for Colombian asylees to learn English even when it is unnecessary. The thesis concludes with the findings that for Colombian asylees, language ideologies have been shaped largely by what each country represents. On the one hand, the United States symbolizes order and safety while Colombia represents displacement, threats, and violence. On the other hand, there is a strong emotional and cultural connection to Colombia and a sense of loneliness in the United States. These associations are part of the result of forced migration, and they ultimately encourage Colombian asylees to learn and speak English and at the same encourage them to maintain Spanish.